

HIV AND PREGNANCY

GET TESTED. GET CARE. GET SUPPORT.

GET TESTED

Now more than ever it's important for women who are pregnant or want to have a baby to be tested for HIV. HIV can be passed from mother to child, but may be prevented by medication if you know your HIV status. As part of your prenatal care your medical provider will offer you the test or provide you with a list of local agencies for free and confidential counseling and testing.

Your medical provider will be there to support you through the process. All HIV testing is voluntary, so your medical provider or counselor will need your permission to give you the test.

WHY SHOULD I GET A TEST FOR HIV?

- There are things you can do to stay healthier both with and without HIV.
- There are treatments available to help you have a healthy pregnancy and live longer.
- There are skilled counselors and health care providers available to support you in making decisions and getting into care.
- Your medical provider can talk about ways of keeping you and your baby safe.

WHAT IS THE HIV TEST?

The test can tell you if you have HIV. It looks for HIV antibodies, which are your body's response to having HIV.

- You can take a blood test or your medical provider can tell you about other options.
- Your test result will be given to you face-to-face by your medical provider/counselor.
- Your medical provider/counselor will help you find the care and support services you need.

WHAT IF THE HIV TEST IS NEGATIVE?

If you are negative, there are ways to stay negative. It is important that you continue to see your medical provider throughout your pregnancy. Your medical provider or counselor will talk with you about lowering your risk for getting HIV, hepatitis and sexually transmitted diseases through sex or drug use. On-going risk behaviors will increase the chance of getting HIV.

WHAT IF THE HIV TEST IS POSITIVE?

There is a risk that babies born to positive women will have HIV, but most will not. Early care and treatment can reduce the risk of your baby being born with HIV to 1-2%. A woman may pass HIV to her baby during pregnancy, during delivery, or by breast-feeding. Other tests are used to see if your baby has HIV. Babies that test positive should be referred to a pediatric HIV specialist for further testing and care.

GET CARE

Getting into care and receiving treatment for HIV can make a difference. Women living with HIV should talk with their medical provider about ways to keep themselves and their babies healthy during pregnancy and after birth.

HOW CAN I HAVE A HEALTHY BABY?

- Continue your prenatal care throughout your pregnancy.
- Ask your medical provider about new treatments. With proper care and treatment early in your pregnancy you can reduce the risk to 1-2% of your baby being born with HIV. Without treatment, one out of every four babies born to mothers with HIV will have HIV.

If you have HIV, getting treatment at any point in your pregnancy will give you a better chance of having a healthy baby.

GET SUPPORT

WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP?

There are many counselors, health care providers and organizations to go to for information, care and support. Your medical provider or counselor will help you find them.

Your medical provider or counselor can provide information on:

- Ways of lowering risk through sex and drug use activities
- Other available services, such as substance abuse treatment, needle exchange, and mental health programs

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If you are HIV positive, there are additional services available including:

- Transportation and child care for medical visits
- Food assistance
- A case manager, someone who will help you find and get into available services
- Other support services, including help in telling your partners and family

**For more information call the AIDS Action
Committee Hotline at 1-800-235-2331
TTY 617-437-1672**

* PRODUCED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
HIV/AIDS Bureau